

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
Fourth Annual Report on Progress and Accomplishments in Implementing the Federal
Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-107)
2005

Over the past year, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the Office of Departmental Grants Management and Oversight (ODGMO), has provided leadership for the simplification and consolidation of grant application and reporting requirements for all HUD grant programs and for improving the effectiveness of funded programs. HUD's eGrants goal is to leverage technology to empower our business partners, program offices and the Department as a whole to increase housing and development services to quantitatively improve communities. HUD's eGrants effort enables HUD Program Offices to use shared processes and common data in the management of HUD's programs.

The Department successfully managed the transition from a paper to an electronic platform and the changes required to move HUD's eGrants initiative toward achieving the e-Government goal of the President's Management Agenda.

HUD's initiatives and activities in support of simplification efforts for this reporting period include the accomplishments described below.

I. Participation in the Government-wide Streamlining and Grants.gov Efforts

Public Law 106-107 Working Groups. HUD is an active member of the Public Law (P.L.) 106-107 (Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999) Working Group meetings to streamline, simplify and consolidate grant program application submission and reporting requirements; and, identify areas where consolidation and streamlining of grant programs are more easily achieved. ODGMO advocated HUD's interest to ensure that the Department's opinions, processes, procedures and ideas were expressed and considered by the groups throughout the process. HUD served in the following groups covering both discretionary and mandatory programs:

HUD Participates in These Groups

Pre-Award Group
Post-Award Group
Audit Oversight Group
Electronic Processing Group
Reports Subcommittee
Algorithm Subcommittee
Intellectual Property Report Work Group
Mandatory Programs Working Group
Grants Policy Committee
HUD eGrants Policy Board
Grants Executive Board

HUD Chairs These Groups

Real Property Report Work Group
Grants Administration Work Group

GMLoB Board

HUD is a member of the team comprised of representatives from the Pre-Award and Post-Award Work Groups that prepared for publication in the Federal Register a draft Federal Register notice to relocate three Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars in Subtitle A of 2 CFR. These are the cost principles for institutions of higher education, other nonprofit organizations, and States, local governments, and Tribal governments in (OMB) Circulars A-21, A-87, and A-122.

HUD participated in the Mandatory Programs Working Group Subcommittee under the Pre-Award Group to establish Standard Form (SF)-424 for use by mandatory programs when submitting application or plans to Federal agencies for review and approval. A cover page for the Mandatory Program SF-424 has been approved for utilization. The SF-424 Mandatory Program cover page establishes the data standard for electronic application submission through Grants.gov.

Under the Post-Award Group, HUD chairs the development of a common property report to be used government-wide to gather status on real property purchased with Federal funds and in the possession of recipients of Federal financial assistance. The report is being cleared by the other Federal grant making agencies for final distribution to OMB for approval and publication in the Federal Register.

HUD worked with the Reports Subcommittee under the Post-Award Group to establish standard financial status reporting requirements for all programs.

HUD is the chair of a newly developed Grants Administration Workgroup under the Post-Award Work Group. Currently there are numerous ways grants administration is being conducted through out the Federal Government, which causes an administrative burden on the grantees. The goals of the Grants Administration Workgroup are to benchmark the various ways the Government approaches grants administration; incorporate standard reports such as: Performance Progress Report, Real Property Report, Personal Property Report, and Federal Financial Report in the grants administration process; and, identify best practices and recommend areas for streamlining and consolidation.

HUD is a member of the Algorithm Subcommittee of the Grants Executive Board, which has been tasked with reviewing the funding algorithm that is being used to determine the contribution each agency is required to make to Grants.gov. The subcommittee will also make a recommendation that will be applied to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 budgets and beyond. With the expansion of the Grants Executive Board beyond the original 11 agencies, a request has been made for this review. The subcommittee's goal is to achieve by September 2005, a rational, equitable and transparent formula that uses a combination of criteria as the basis for agency contributions for funding Grants.gov. The subcommittee has issued a data call for information that will lead to the development of the algorithm.

Grants Management Line of Business Board (GMLoB). The GMLoB is composed of representatives from the 26 Federal agencies responsible for managing grants and grants policy

to identify common system solutions for managing grants. HUD serves as a member of the board. The Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) was initiated as an e-Government opportunity to develop a common business model for back-office grants management activities in order to improve the efficiency of these operations. The common business model developed by participating agencies was to identify groups, or consortia, of grant-making agencies committed to working together to meet common needs. Each consortium will be responsible for providing a system or system components to meet the back-office needs of member agencies. Each consortia solution would be consistent with a common technical approach.

GMLoB's goal for the remainder of FY 2005 is to identify three consortia that will begin solution planning and alignment in FY 2006. HUD is reviewing its capabilities to declare "consortia intent" to either lead a consortium or participate as a member.

Grants Executive Board. HUD is a member of the Grants Executive Board and has provided a full financial contribution in FY 2005 to support the Grants.gov /Find and Apply.

The Grants Executive Board was established as an executive body to support the Grants.gov initiative. Originally limited to the 11 initiative partner agencies, the Grants Executive Board recently expanded and is currently composed of senior level representation from 26 Federal grant-making agencies. There is also representation from the GMLoB, OMB, and Grants Policy Committee to ensure effective coordination among these Committees

Grants Policy Committee. HUD is a member of the Grants Policy Committee, which was established as a committee of the CFO Council and is composed of staff representatives who manage grant programs from a CFO, CIO or grant management office. The committee is responsible for grant policy recommendations to OMB and reports to the CFO Council.

HUD Grants Governance Board. HUD established a Grants Governance Board to provide oversight and guidance and to streamline and otherwise improve the performance of the Department's grants and Federal financial assistance programs. The HUD Grants Governance Board is structured to parallel the GMLoB and its subcommittees, establish strategic policy for HUD's back office functions, and determine which, if any, Grants Management Line of Business Centers of Excellence, HUD will become aligned with for online grant system functionality.

HUD Grant Office Participation.

The Program Support Division of the Office of Single Family Housing has been involved with the Grants.gov program from the beginning at various levels.

- Participated in interagency work groups;
- Responsible for creating core data elements for programs;
- Participated in Departmental work groups that defined and implemented streamlining grant activities and processes;

- Participated in the Grants Management Line of Business Task Force;
- Provided management support to indicate the agency's support for the effort and expectations for staff;
- Participated in workshops and formal training;
- Conducted reviews of internal policies to assess the potential for streamlining the grant process; and
- Coordinated activities with Field Office staff on modifying programs and providing information on program for their input.

The Office of Public and Indian Housing (PIH) in preparation to facilitate applicants' use of Grants.gov, included an assessment of the capacity of Grants.gov to accommodate PIH applications and subsequent feasible adjustments were made within the limited time frame that afforded as many programs as possible to be included in the FY 2005 electronic submission process. While most sections or documents of PIH applications could not be directly entered/completed within the architecture of Grants.gov, applicants were able to attach files, scan documents, and/or fax documents that allowed them to electronically submit a complete application package. PIH continues to redefine processes including adjustments to NOFAs and forms to better accommodate collection of information that applicants have to provide to ensure that all HUD program requirements are satisfied in making funding determinations. In addition, PIH is continuing ongoing efforts to foster the implementation of improvements required in the short term to Grants.gov and HUD's interface with Grants.gov to better accommodate needs and requirements. Finally, PIH continues its participation on multiple working groups and teams charged with actual implementation of HUD enterprise architecture that accommodates grants management needs and requirements. PIH actively participated in Department-wide outreach efforts notifying, educating and preparing applicants for the new submission process.

PIH, Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) streamlined the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) program by eliminating the submission of several previously required documents. Effective with the FY 2004 NOFA, published in December 2004, applicants were no longer required to submit financial or procurement policies as part of their application response to Rating Factor 1, Administrative Capacity. Instead, ONAP revised the NOFA language to require submission of a tribal resolution adopting the required resolution. In addition, previous NOFA's required the submission of the construction standards adopted by a tribe (for construction projects). ONAP revised the FY 2005 NOFA to similarly require only the submission of the tribal resolution that identified and adopted the construction standards. The elimination of the submission requirement for these documents significantly streamlined the application packages.

The Office of MF Housing staff reviewed its NOFAs and made changes in an effort to simplify the application process. The staff encouraged applicants, interested industry people, as well as HUD Field Office staff to provide feedback on the requirements for the submission, review and processing of applications. The NOFA clearance process is another internal process, which allows program staff to revise and streamline the application submission and review process based on comments received from staff in other program offices. Additionally, the General Section of the SuperNOFA includes Form HUD-2994, Client Comments and Suggestions, which asks for feedback from the program applicants regarding whether or not the program is user-friendly and suggestions for improvements. All of these efforts assist program staff in structuring the program for the following year to be as user-friendly as possible.

The Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC), Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD), Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO), and Office of Policy Development and Research (PDR) participated in the P.L. 106-107 internal HUD meetings and provided input on all required documents. The organizations also participated in the development of core data elements and their implementation.

HUD Eighth Annual Super Notice Of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA). HUD published its eighth annual SuperNOFA on March 21, 2005. HUD's consolidated NOFA contains notices of funding availability for approximately \$2.3 billion in HUD program funds covering 50 funding opportunities. The SuperNOFA has allowed HUD to develop common procedures and forms covering its competitive grant programs. The SuperNOFA utilizes a set of 12 common forms for capturing applicant information, detailed budget information, and performance goals tied to specific activities and tasks in the application submission. The use and reuse of common forms promotes citizen access and understanding, customer service, agency financial and technical stewardship, and streamlines and consolidates information across all program areas.

Performance Measurements Instituted in HUD's Grant Programs. In FY 2003 HUD instituted the use of a Results Oriented Management Assessment Logic Model across programs to begin to baseline performance metrics in our grant programs. The goal is for grantees to define, measure and account for their performance. During FY 2005, ODGMO conducted an assessment of the quality of the Logic Models submitted with the FY 2003 funding applications and the results achieved and provided this information to the program areas and to grantees to assist them in improving the quality of the Logic Models, and, therefore, the effectiveness of their programs. HUD intends for FY 2006 to use the results of the assessments to provide applicants with identifiable activities, outputs, and outcomes for each program with the intent of receiving consistent quantifiable data through Grants.gov as part of the application reporting requirements. HUD is also working with program areas to identify criteria to formulate Return on Investment (ROI) calculations for HUD programs. HUD plans to continue to assess the Logic Models on an annual basis and eventually develop performance metrics for each HUD funded program. ODGMO conducted the following satellite broadcasts to provide information on the Logic Model to applicants, grantees and HUD staff.

- April 13, 2005 – Logic Model training for HUD staff;

- April 13, 2005 – Logic Model training for applicants and grantees;
- April 26, 2005 - Evaluating Logic Models for HUD staff; and
- April 26, 2005 – Evaluating Logic Models for grantees.

II. Internal Efforts to Create an Environment Conducive to Grants Streamlining and Simplification and Assess Impact of Changes

General Approach

HUD has worked aggressively to keep HUD Headquarters, Field Office staff, and the grantee community informed about the capabilities of Grants.gov and government policies that relate to the President's Management Agenda and the GMLoB.

Outreach to Internal and External Constituencies.

PDR performed extensive outreach to the grants community to ensure that they were aware of the new requirements for submitting grants through Grants.gov. Examples of this outreach included:

- For the PATH NOPI competition, PD&R posted information on PATHNet.org, including a link to the Federal Register announcement, as well as, guidance on the eGrants process and reminders to register and submit early;
- For the University Partnerships programs, PD&R conducted extensive outreach to potential grantees during training sessions and conferences advising them of eGrants. PD&R also posted information on eGrants on the Office of University Partnerships program website www.oup.org; and
- Staff addressed questions that applicants had about the registration process.

The Office of Single Family Housing, Program Support Division was effective in preparing organizations and HUD Regional Homeownership Centers (HOC) for the transition to submit grant applications from paper to electronic forms on Grants.gov. Activities included:

- Provided early notifications by sending letters and emails to agencies about the change in procedures;
- Posted new process procedures requiring agencies to submit applications on Grants.gov; and
- Implemented a requirement to pre-register all agencies participating in the FY 2005 grant application process to assure complete readiness in accessing Grants.gov.

PIH Field Offices and Program Offices ran several information and support campaigns directly contacting the PIH program community about new application submission requirements and

urged potential applicants to apply early to accommodate the learning curve and the additional steps required to submit applications through Grants.gov. PIH ONAP developed several internal guidebooks for Field Office staff to provide consistency and to assist them in evaluating applications for competitive funding programs. Changes were made to the ICDBG Guidebook to further streamline the way that applications were reviewed. The time permitted to review applications was reduced by eliminating duplicative reviews and by providing a “factor-by-factor” description of how to evaluate the material submitted by the applicant. The intent was to provide consistency in reviews and to streamline the internal review process.

FHEO senior management issued numerous memoranda indicating the agency’s support for the effort and expectations for staff on Grants.gov. As a result of these memos, FHEO as part of the FY 2005 Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) NOFA captured all of the senior management electronic grant objectives. These objectives were then implemented through discussions with current and potential FHIP grant participants. As a result of these efforts, FHEO had a 15 percent gain in applications over the FY 2004 application count and a number of new organizations submitted through Grants.gov for the first time. Going forward, FHEO will assess customer surveys received to determine where further streamlining can be accomplished. In addition, they developed a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Grants.gov process that can be reviewed for future reference. FHEO requested potential applicants to submit their applications early due to the electronic filing requirements. Therefore, initial feedback from potential applicants about the site was favorable. Unlike this fiscal year, FHEO will use separate CFDA numbers for each of its initiatives. This will standardize and simplify the potential applicant’s ability to select one or more initiatives for funding.

OHHLHC sponsors an annual conference for new grantees to provide technical assistance and information about the OHHLHC grants management programs. OHHLHC conducted two consolidated satellite broadcasts for all of its seven NOFAs, one to the Field Office staff and one to the public.

The Office of MF Housing staff conducted four satellite broadcasts providing technical training for all technical disciplines (Headquarters and Field Office staff) involved in the review of MF Housing program applications, as well as to the general public. The broadcasts stressed, among things, the importance of compliance with the requirement for the electronic submission of applications, as well as the procedures for filing such applications. MF Housing staff held several conference calls with HUD Headquarters Program and Field Office staff to explain further the electronic submission and application review requirements, as well as to keep all informed of changes that impact on these requirements. Additionally, Program staff in the local HUD Offices and Headquarters held workshops and/or provided outreach to HUD’s housing partners and customers at industry meetings and conferences to explain current program requirements. Because this is the first year for the electronic submission of MF Housing program applications, greater emphasis was placed on the electronic submission requirements at the workshops held this year. In addition, information about Multifamily Housing’s electronic submission requirements has been widely disseminated to the public through the NOFA publication in the Federal Register. Field Office staff used their mailing lists of program participants to notify potential applicants of the publication of the NOFAs and

to invite them to their workshops to discuss all program requirements, and for this year, to discuss the electronic submission of applications. The NOFAs encouraged applicants to participate in the annual satellite broadcasts and provided instructions on how to obtain copies of the NOFAs through the SuperNOFA Information Center and from HUD's grant web site. For the convenience of the applicants, HUD posted the NOFAs and subsequent technical corrections on its web site and Grants.gov.

CPD took the lead in pursuing grants.gov readiness for their grantees and application access for reviews as follows:

- Conducted advance meetings with program staff to ready them for e-grants;
- Developed and presented detailed training material in anticipation of CPD Headquarters/Field Office staff role in Grants.gov and electronic application readiness. The training material included charts, handouts, and step-by-step registration guides. A training segment was included on Grantee Readiness for E-grants application for advance registration processing and step-by-step readiness;
- Developed several FAQ documents on Grants.gov readiness and posted them on CPD's website;
- Placed messages, guidance and tips on Grants.gov registration requirements and how to apply on CPD's IDIS listserv which is comprised of over 3,000 active grantees and the HOME listserv that provides information to over 11,000 grantees;
- CPD made ongoing efforts to inform the grantees of new requirements and future processes, such as the DUNS number requirement and the Central Contractor Registration; and
- CPD provided prompt and thorough delivery of grantee customer service both through email and telephone contact.

The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives disseminated HUD's Grants.gov registration brochures at 180 two-day grant writing workshops. Approximately 16,000 individuals attended these workshops representing 10,600 nonprofit organizations, including grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations.

HUD's Grants Webpage. HUD's grants webpage at www.hud.gov/grants provides HUD staff, grantees and the general public with updates on new, changing and critical grants related information that impact HUD programs. Specific items of interest on our webpage are:

- Dun and Bradstreet Universal Data Numbering System (DUNS) Number;
 - Use of a Universal Identifier by Grant Applicants Notice;
 - How to Apply for a DUNS Number; and
 - How to Apply for Grants using Grants.gov;
- Grants.gov;

- Find Grant Opportunities; and
- Apply for Grants;
- OMB Guidance;
 - E-Government;
 - President’s Management Agenda;
 - OMB’s e-Government Strategy;
 - E-Authentication Initiative;
 - Business Case;
 - Inter-Agency Electronic Grant Committee; and
 - Information Technology (IT) Architecture Overview;
 - Streamlining Activities Under P.L. 106-107;
 - 2002 Grant Streamlining Activities under P.L. 106-107;
 - Final Rule Establishing 2 CFR Subtitles A and B;
 - Revision to OMB Circular A-133;
 - Proposed Revisions to OMB Circular A-133;
 - OMB Notice on A-110;
 - Notice about Pooled Payments under OMB Circular A-110;
 - Proposed Office of Federal Financial Management Policy Directive;
 - Proposed Standard Data Elements;
 - Notice on OMB Circulars A-21, A-87 and A-122 Cost Comparison Chart 2004; and
 - Proposed Revisions to OMB Circulars A-21, A-87 and A-122;
 - Grants.gov Formerly eGrants (Links to Registering, Finding, and Applying for Grants);
 - Get Started;
 - Registration Checklist;
 - Request DUNS;
 - Central Contractor Registration (CCR);
 - Credential Provider;
 - Find;
 - Apply;
 - Index; and
 - Gov.Benefits.gov;
 - Grants Line of Business;
 - Final Request for Information;
 - Visions, Goals, and Objectives;
 - Press Release; and
 - May 20, 2004, Federal Agency Meeting; and
- Grants.gov Getting Ready;
 - Getting Ready for Grants.gov Brochure;
 - Finding and Applying for Grants Brochure;
 - Grants Application Demo; and
 - Mandatory Electronic Submission (Proposed Rule).

Getting Ready for Grants.gov Outreach. HUD distributed two brochures, titled “Getting Ready for Grants.gov” and “Finding and Applying for Grant Opportunities,” at workshops,

conferences, and exhibits. The brochures are also on our website to inform our external and internal constituents about how to get ready to apply for funding through Grants.gov. The brochures provide information on how to register for a DUNS number and with the CCR. The brochures are posted on the HUD website at <http://www.hud.gov/grants> and are available in English and Spanish.

The brochures are being distributed free at, two-day, intensive Grant Writing Training Workshops being conducted state-wide by the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Approximately 10,600 nonprofit applicants were trained through these workshops on how to apply for HUD funds and encouraged to register to receive Grants.gov funding opportunity notifications, register with grants.gov and a credential provider, and apply for grants electronically using the Grants.gov portal.

2005 Edition of Connecting With Communities: A User's Guide to HUD Programs and the 2005 SuperNOFA Process. ODGMO published the 2005 edition of Connecting With Communities: A User's Guide to HUD Programs and the 2005 SuperNOFA process, which provides detailed information on HUD's funding availability, program descriptions, information on grant programs and requirements for applying for funding, and information on formula based programs. The Guidebook provides a message to HUD's community partners from Secretary Alphonso Jackson advising that HUD's funding opportunities are placed at www.grants.gov/Find and Apply encouraging applicants to register at the Grants.gov website. The guidebook is distributed to approximately 60,000 entities on an annual basis. It is a tool for understanding HUD programs and is used throughout the year by HUD staff, constituents, grantees, applicants and the general public.

Satellite Broadcasts. ODGMO also conducted three satellite broadcasts on Getting Ready for Grants.gov, applying on line for funding, and the related federal government activities:

- March 30, 2005 and April 20, 2005 - Broadcasts for HUD applicants and grantees providing detailed information on the Grants.gov registration process, finding funding opportunities, and creating and submitting a grant application through Grants.gov.
- May 5, 2005 – Overview of the Grants.gov registration process and opportunity for applicants and grantees to address FAQs that had been previously posted on our webpage.

HUD Accolades from the Grants.gov Executive Board. HUD was recognized as a "Goal Star" achiever at the June 2005 Grants.gov Stakeholder meeting for achieving 134 % of goal to post application packages (planned 35, actual 47). In addition, HUD was recognized for its achievement of exceeding, by 300%, its initial goal of receiving 1500 applications through Grants.gov; instead, HUD received 5,000. HUD is the lead agency in the total number of applications received through Grants.gov and is also one of the nine agencies – out of 26 – that earned a Grants.gov Goal Star.

Reduction in the Number of Forms for Application Submission in furtherance of P.L. 106-107, The Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999. ODGMO has been working to streamline and simplify HUD's application and reporting

requirements. Eight forms were eliminated in the FY 2005 NOFA process. The HUD 424, HUD 424C and HUD 424M were replaced with the Standard 424 forms. The PIH ROSS program eliminated forms 52753, 52754, 52752, and 52764. In addition, PDR combined form numbers 3011 and 3012 into a single form.

Streamlining of Application Process. ODGMO reviewed each program NOFA with a view towards streamlining and simplifying the application and to ensure that the OMB issued format for uniform funding announcements was followed by all program areas.

III. Implementing the Recent Changes Affecting the Pre-Award Process

A. Grants.govFIND

Electronic Posting of Grant Announcements. All (100 percent) of HUD's programs announced by public notice through a NOFA in 2005 were posted to the Grants.gov/Find site and available to the public at www.Grants.gov/Find. HUD's Federal Register notices directed applicants to the Grants.gov/Find site rather than to HUD's hud.gov website or program area websites as was done in previous years. During FY 2005 HUD posted 50 funding announcements to Grants.gov covering funding opportunities representing availability for approximately \$2.3 billion in HUD program funds.

B. Announcement Template

Policy Guidance for Template Usage. HUD instituted the Grants.gov announcement template in FY 2005. All (100 percent) of the NOFAs issued in FY 2005 were in the approved format. The NOFAs included discretionary grants, capital advances (Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program and Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program) and voucher programs (Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency Program and Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Program).

Feedback on the Template. Form HUD-2994, "You Are Our Client," which is included with each NOFA, provides applicants an opportunity to make comments and suggestions for improving the application process. The comments received this year will assist HUD to improve the application process.

C. Grants.gov APPLY

HUD Successfully Received Electronic Applications. HUD received electronically through Grants.gov/APPLY all of its 2005 grant applications except for the Continuum of Care. As of July 28, 2005, HUD had received 5287 electronic applications. HUD received 5864 paper applications in FY 2004.

Program Office	Total Applications Submitted To Grants.gov As of 07/28/05	Total Number of Applications Rejected By Grants.gov	Total Number of Duplicate Applications Received by HUD	Net Electronic Applications Submitted As of 07/28/05 (Less Duplicates)
CPD	1157	92	0	1065
FHEO	308	10	57	241
HSNG	1203	101	17	1085
LEAD	259	24	15	220
PDR	504	42	36	426
PIH	2399	120	29	2250
Total	5830	389	154	5287

HUD Rulemaking for Submission of Electronic Applications through Grants.gov/Apply. On November 23, 2004, HUD posted a proposed rule providing for mandatory electronic submission when an application for funding assistance is placed on the Grants.gov/Apply site. Programs covered by this rule include grants, cooperative agreements, capital fund or operating fund subsidy programs, capital advance awards, Section 8 and Section 108 Loan Guarantees. The DUNS requirement does not apply to FHA insurance or loan guarantee transactions that are not associated with a grant program or a grant award. The final rule has cleared the Department and OMB and is tentatively scheduled for publication in September 2005.

Interface with Grants.gov. HUD implemented the Grants Interface Management System (GIMS). This system, which manages the interface between HUD and Grants.gov, allows HUD to receive grants electronically. For the first time in the history of the Department, HUD has a central database of application data.

IV. Other

Lesson Learned

Overall HUD views this NOFA application period as a success. This year HUD required applicants to submit their applications electronically through Grants.gov, unless a waiver was granted. The basis for waivers included, but were not limited to: (1.) lack of available Internet access in the geographic location in which the applicant's business office is located or (2.) physical disability of the applicant that prevents the applicant from accessing or responding to the application electronically. At the beginning of our FY 2005 NOFA on March 21, 2005, we initially expected 1500 applications instead, as of July 28, 2005, received 5830, with a 6.7% error rate, after subtracting the duplicate applications, HUD received a total of 5287 unique electronic applications.

However, there were lessons learned from this initiative, such as:

1. The Grants.gov registration process is cumbersome and requires up to two weeks processing time;
2. Many applicants expressed confusion about having to go to multiple sites to register and be told at each site that registration was complete;

3. Applicants had difficulty understanding Grants.gov error messages and thus were unable to determine whether the problem was internal to their organization or external to Grants.gov; and
4. Applicants did not know where to find the saved version of their application on their desktop, which limited their ability to conduct a quality check of the application that they submitted.

HUD plans to address these obstacles and specific issues identified by staff and the applicant community through extensive outreach conducted through satellite broadcasts, our website, applicant registration guide, and brochures. In addition, internal policies and procedures will be reviewed to look at ways of improving the electronic application process.

Future Items

Centralized Back-end Processing System. The OCIO is working with program areas to consolidate back office systems in accordance with policy directives established by GMLoB. HUD will continue plans to provide a Department-wide centralized back-end processing system, which will link to www.grants.gov. The HUD eGrants System will handle all stages of pre-award and post-award grant processing. It will interface with HUD's core accounting system to manage fund accounts and forward valid payment requests to the accounting system for disbursement. HUD's long-term plan envisions an Enterprise Grants Management System that conforms to the Federal GMLoB architecture. As part of our centralized back-end processing, HUD will be able to leverage the data standardization that was done to get ready for Grants.gov.

HUD intends to collect proposed XML grant performance data and metrics in GIMS and make available to the grant programs for utilization and assessment. Utilizing the tools available from Grants.gov, HUD will collect XML application data, which will form the basis for monitoring performance as programs begin and are executed.

Attachments

- Government-wide Report on the Implementation of Public Law 106-107
- 2005 Connecting With Communities: A User's Guide to HUD Programs and 2005 SuperNOFA Process
- Finding and Applying for Grant Opportunities Brochure